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THE LIFE OF THE CELEBRATED BENJ. STRATFORD,

Who was tried and condemned last SURRY ASSIZES for a Forgery, and executed at *Guildford*, on *September the* 6th, 1766.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

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THE

LIFE

OF THE

CELEBRATED

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MVSEVM BRITANNICVM

Quod fuit esse, quod est, quod non fuit esse, quod esse,
Esse quod est, non esse quod est, non esse, erit esse.

B. S.

THE above Distich properly digested must appologize for not treading in the Paths of my Predecessors, who at an involuntary Exit, would have bequeathed to the Press an Account of their Births and Education; yet although I am certain such a Discovery cannot benefit any Class of Society, or Individual, lest my Taciturnity should be misconstrued, I adventure to advance, that I was ushered into the World with great natural Parts, and through a juvenile Course, had a fair prolific Field, and fine Manure to form excellent Improvements; and if temporary Titles ennobled Body and Soul, could trace to a Fountain of Nobility, whence I derive Existence Four Hundred Years backwards;

However, I ſhall content myſelf with that engaging Reflection of Mind, that I am an immediate Deſcendant from *Adam* and *Eve*; conſtituted with as much Propriety, though not equal Power as *Bourbon* or *Naſſau*.

But ſince the Beauties of Study had not ſufficient Chains to engage my Attention, I ſhall confine myſelf entirely to the Tranſactions of my Life, reſpecting its Attachment to Virtue and Vice; ſtrange Propenſity! and more wonderful Infatuation!

At the Age of Seventeen, being then an Orphan, and under the Care of a valuable Uncle, who ſpared no Expence to enrich and educate my Mind, I began to conceit myſelf a Proficient in Learning; and having ſlightly run through the *Claſſics*, and dipped into *Homer*, acquired a Smattering of *French*, the uſe of the Sword, and Heels, I imagined a further Purſuit of Knowledge unneceſſary; and that my ſuppoſed gentlemanlike Accompliſhments entitled me to an exalted Station in Life: at this Age the Vanity of the World, the

Dawn

Dawn of Manhood, and the Wiſdom of the Fleſh all challenged my Fortitude, and figuratively ſpeaking, I was inſtantaneouſly conveyed from the Cloſet of Literature, to a Seminary of ſenſual Pleaſures, Luſt, and Luxury! here I exulted in being a proclaimed Rake, the Creature of the Fair, libidinous to the laſt Degree, Slave to uncontroulable Paſſions, and inſatiable Appetite.

The Metamorphoſis pleaſed me, the Hazard of Reputation, preſent Maintenance and Expectancy all incurred to gratify Deſire; yet it was all my own Act, and Deed, and I would not have it underſtood that I condemn the Females; on the contrary, I, and every reaſonable Man muſt admit the Maſculine to be the Antidote and Deſtroyer of the Feminine; for my Part I have ſeduced and deflowered many, and (couched under the Diſguiſe of honourable, and inviolate Intentions) have fraudulently obtained the Eſſence of that Virtue, which cloathed in its native Purity, and Innocence, held not the leaſt Correſpondence with Levity or or laſcivious Inclinations; and to the great Shame,

of all Mankind be it ſpoken, that the different Degrees are replete with different and diſtinct Villanies; the Men of Faſhion, Figure, and Fortune, termed the *Beau-Monde*, boaſt of their Conqueſts and Victories obtained over the Fair; and, as a Deed of Gallantry, glory in the Ruin of their common Siſter. The loſs of their Characters (if in a State of Servitude or Dependance) diſqualify them to continue their uſual Method, or Manner of living; and what more eligible Expedient could be uſed than to expoſe to Sale, and Traffick that once ineſtimable Jewel, that had engaged Man to violate, captivate, and ſully all its Beauties.

The Merchandize is not prohibited, and if warranted inviolate the Reſentment is ſurely Equitable; are they not conſcientiouſly blameleſs that exerciſe a Trade or Calling among the very Species from whom they learned it? or have they not an undoubted Right to live by that Acquiſition, which incapacitates them to look another way? Yet I really believe the moſt common Proſtitute under the Face of Heaven, however Tranquil may

ſeem

ſeem her Countenance, in Secret mourns her unhappy Lot, and envying the Seat of Virtue, wiſhes ſhe had been Chaſte; How mean then, how inglorious, or rather how infamous muſt be the Declaration of a dying Man that admits of Free-Agency, and ſuppoſes himſelf a capital Pillar, to charge his Ruin on weak unguarded Woman? Yet it is almoſt general without an Exception, that all Men forced out of this World, have raſled all its Luſtre, which from the ſacred Caſket they have ſtolen; and endeavour to extenuate their Guilt, and exonerate their Conſciences, by proclaiming Females the abſolute Cauſe of their Deſtruction. Shew me a Woman baſe in Practice and Principle, and debaſed in Character, and if I don't convince you that Man has ſolely manumized and marred that Frame, I'll join Iſſue in the Conjecture; if I do, how unpardonable is it to chalenge in Abhorrence, as an Attonement for their Crimes, the very Object they have worked to Frailty? Can there a Man be ſelected in a Thouſand that has not uſed falſe, flatttering Arguments, Lies, and Oaths to quench an iniquitous carnal

Fire,

Fire, at the Expence of the everlasting Happiness of the innocent Creature fancifully beloved? And shall they afterwards so far derogate from their boasted Superiority, as to admit of Conquerors, defame the vanquished Victor, and tax them with Blood? 'Tis a shameful, scandalous Excuse at any Hour, abstracted from the last!

From what I have already said it may reasonably be supposed that respecting my Fate, I hold all Women blameless, admit them guilty only by Man's persuasions, and that the Prejudice I have received from the Sex, is inadequate to what I have conveyed. Thus much with this Conclusion, that I consider them as terrestrial Angels formed for Love, and worthy to be beloved; it may possibly be urged that Woman first received original Sin, imparted it to her Lord and Master, and intailed it on Posterity; but before that Truth is accepted, it should be asked in what Form and Figure the supposed Lucifer accosted our Mother *Eve*, whether or no the Perfections of Man, the Quintescence of these Perfections, and the Intelligencers of that Quintescence were not all united to exact the

Virgin

Virgin Tribute, the Reality of the Apple, the Knowledge thereby obtained, the Excellence or Depravity of that fruitful Fruit which has transfer'd to us its Fruits, the Cauſe of the ready Acquieſcence of its Governor, the immediate Compliance of the Woman's Conſort, and the ſtrict Obſervance of their Deſcendants in thoſe Maxims from thence to this. Let a new *Milton* emerge to both, and ſay, if the whole Offspring of that firſt Conſceſſion do not employ their Talents to deceive, defraud, to cheat and ruin Woman, and and if after the irretrieveable Loſs of Virtue's brilliant Ornaments, they are not to be pitied, whom Neceffity obliges to continue a Correſpondence with the Deſtroyer of their Innocehce: however I would have it underſtood that Chaſtity in Woman is an ineſtimable Treaſure, it is the Mirrour of all good Works, the Source of Virgin-Felicity, the Security of Content, and the Load-Stone of conjugal Affection; therefore he that in Maſque, or by Deception takes from a credulous Maid all that's engaging in her, has much to anſwer for, and he unworthy the Name

of

of Man, that from the Purſuit of unlawful Pleaſures, is diſcarded by Society, and at the Laſt diſcovers his Weakneſs by publiſhing his involuntary Condeſcention to pleaſe himſelf.

I ſhall now proceed to the Matter in Hand, and take a Survey of myſelf, entering into the eighteenth Year of my Age, when having totally abandoned Study and devoted myſelf to Pleaſure, I found it difficult to procure a Sufficiency of that neceſſary Ingredient which purchaſes all Things: I peremptorily declined every Propoſal for eſtabliſhing myſelf in Life, and would be nothing but a Gentleman; it then remained to find the Requiſites; at laſt revolving in my Mind the many Advantages deriving from Travel, and the great Benefit ariſing from Foreign Trade, I determined to go Abroad, and no Place ſeemed equal in Proſpect to the *Eaſt Indies* to make a Man quickly Rich, accordingly I prevailed on my Uncle to let me make a Voyage thither, he generouſly fitted me out like a Gentleman, and in the Year 1753 ſent me on board the *Sandwich*, *John Purling* Commander, bound to *Bombay*, on the Coaſt of *Malabar*, and

Moca,

Mocha, in the *Red Sea*: I had before this learned the Mathematicks, and entering into the practical Part by keeping the Ship's Reckoning was in a very short Time justly esteemed a good Navigator; we had a pleasant Voyage of thirty Months without any uncommon Disaster, and an Opportunity of remarking the Manners of the different Sects of People, on the *Malabar* and *Arabick* Shores, at the *Cape of Good Hope*, the Island of *Bombay*, *Madagascar*, and St. *Helena*, and here I cannot omit taking Notice of an Inclination I had to have left the Ship; at the Island of *Madagascar* the People are in general affable, courteous and sincere, the Women amorous, obliging, and free, they enjoy all their Pleasures in Common, not the least Tincture of Jealousy or Churlishness in the Men, the very Princes and State Officers would instruct their Wives and Daughters to Banquet with Strangers; Money they despise as useless, Ornamental Dress unnecessary, Decency as in Paradise they observe, no closeting of Love, but when Desires approach, retire with a consenting She, and unincumbred on a

Mat blend their ſoft ſable Skins; 'tis a State of Happineſs, they know no guilt, nor are they devoid of Duty to their Maker, but with profound Reverence, each Morn and Eve, proſtrate their Bodies in adoration to the beſpangled Frontiſpiece of Heaven, and the grand Architect of that reſplendent Manſion. With much Reluctance I left that Iſland. On my return Home in the Year 1755, I found my Uncle and Benefactor was no more, and that his Fortune tho' conſiderable, was not likely to be of any great Advantage to his legated Relations: his Widow, the moſt indulgent Aunt that Nature ever formed, in ſome Meaſure, made me think lightly of the loſs of my Uncle.

It was now the *French* began to infringe on our *American* Rights, and a War Daily expected, and although I had bent my Mind on great Accumulations of eaſtern Ore, I reſolved to relinquiſh that Purſuit, and endeavour to acquire Honour and Riches in the Service of my Country; to effect which, I was once more equiped like a Gentleman and introduced with a favourable Recommendation

dation to Sir *Thomas Stanhope* into His Majeſty's Navy on board the *Edinburgh* of 70 Guns, in the Station of a Midſhipman; the Ship then lay at *Plymouth*, and I, by the Direction of Sir *Thomas*, ſet out for *Portſmouth* in order to go round by Sea: we embarked in the *Tilbury*, and the very firſt Day furniſhed Matter of great Concern to me, I was immediately introduced to Officers of my own Rank, and in the Evening ſet down to Piquet, and from that to Lanſquenet, when in a few Hours I loſt upwards of eighty Guineas, which was to have ſupported me in the Character of a Gentleman. Bad News ſoon tranſpires, Sir *Thomas Stanhope* (then on board the ſame Ship) received the Information, he ſent for me, and told me he deteſted the Practice of Gaming, and that when we came to *Plymouth* I might go on Shore, and diſpoſe of myſelf as I pleaſed, for that he would not receive me on board his Ship; this mortified me very much, and having loſt my dear Aunt, and having no farther Proſpect of Supplies, I expoſtulated with Sir *Thomas* on the Conſequences of of incurring the Diſpleaſure of my Friends, which

was unavoidable if he abandoned me; at length, he generouſly forgave me, on my Promiſe never to commit the like Errors. I remained ſix Months in the *Edinburgh*, and ſeemingly had ſecured the Countenance, and good Opinion of my Commander; he frequently invited me to his Table, treated me with particular Marks of Favour, and when he was appointed to command the *Swiftſure*, cauſed me to be taken on board the ſame Ship with him. By thus much it will appear, as Sir *Thomas Stanhope* has often ſince declared, that if I had conducted myſelf properly, by his Intereſt only, I might, before the Concluſion of the War, have commanded as good a Ship as any in the Navy. But my unbounded Ambition aſpired to be great at once; I could not bear to ſee any Perſon ſpend more Money, dreſs better, or keep a finer Girl than Myſelf, all which Art was to ſupport; the Subſtance being wanting, I run in Debt with moſt of the Taylors in *Portſmouth*, *Goſport*, and *Plymouth*, had a Wardrobe of the moſt faſhionable Cloaths, and as it is a known Maxim that Money begets Money, ſo Dreſs begat me Credit; I

initiated

inſtiated myſelf into the Eſteem of a Maſter Builder, under the Pretence of courting one of his Daughters, and lending him a Thouſand Pounds when I came of Age, borrowed One Hundred Guineas of him, which I never re-paid; ſeveral other Sums of Money I borrowed from different People with repeated Aſſurances of behaving honourable when I took Poſſeſſion of my Eſtate, which from my Actions and Appearance was ſuppoſed to be very large; at length the Plot was diſcovered, and Truth proclaimed the Cheat; I was immediately harraſſed from every Quarter, and conducted to a *Spunging-Houſe* at the inſtigation of different Tradeſmen; out of this Hobble I got myſelf extricated, by the Means of a Girl I was on the Point of Marriage with at *Portſmouth*, (her Friends yet remaining in the Dark) who reſpecting the Reality of my Pretenſions, adventured to bail me; being at Liberty, I hired a Horſe at *Goſport*, made what haſte I could to *London*, where I ſold the Horſe, &c. for half their Value.

I immediately ſhipped myſelf Lieutenant of a Privateer belonging to *Guernſey*, then lying in the

Thames,

Thames, in which Veſſel I proceeded to that Iſland, and from thence, on a Cruiſe, we took two Prizes; but on our return, I left her, forfeited my Title to my Dividend; I had no more Buſineſs in the Navy, and once more declared myſelf a Man of Fortune, by which Means, and falſe Bills which I gave on Perſons in *London*, I procured Credit to cut a good Figure, and began to pay my Addreſſes to the moſt conſiderable Ladies in the Iſland; in theſe Attempts, as well as in moſt others (through the Courſe of my Life) I did not fail of Succeſs, and was juſt taking Poſſeſſion of a fine Woman, and plenty of Money, when the inauſpicious Winds returned my Bills proteſted, this was a deep Cut, the News ſoon ſpread, and alarmed the People, I was obliged to bear it, and to avoid a Priſon to go on board a Privateer, then under Sail, with no more Cloaths than I had on my Back; the Captain and I had before been intimate, and being himſelf of an enterprizing Genius he the more readily countenanced me, and appointed me Captain of Marines, to ſhare equally with himſelf; we proceeded forthwith to *Liſbon*, feaſting, and enjoying ourſelves, regardleſs of the

Purpoſes

Purpoſes the Ship was intended for. At *Liſbon* the Captain raiſed Money on the Credit of the Owners of the Ship, and fupplied me with a Sufficiency to keep Pace with him in Pleaſure, here he diſcharged his firſt Lieutenant to put me in that Office, and to enable us to fulfil a Reſolution we had formed of making a Cruiſe in the *Mediterranean Seas*, and at the Expence of our Employers, to viſit the Ports of *Italy:* We took in Wines, Fruits, and the beſt of Proviſions, and were preparing to depart, when an unlucky Accident had like to have fruſtrated our Intentions, and involved us in a long Train of Difficulties. My noble Captain and myſelf having an Inclination to amuſe ourſelves with the *Dulcineas* of *Portugal*, had at the Expence of two Moidores, each engaged a Partner for the Night; frequent Embraces having lulled us to ſleep, about the Hour of Two in the Morning, we were awakened by the Noiſe of the Watch, forcibly entering the Houſe; in this Conſternation we hurried on our Cloaths, and agreed it to be the moſt prudent Method, when we found the Chamber Door beſet, to jump out of the Window, and leave the Ladies to ſhift for themſelves; a very little Time brought them up

Stairs,

Stairs, and as little convey'd us out of the Window Sword in Hand, but how great was our Surprize to find at the Corner of the Street, a Part of the Patrole in Ambuſh, who immediately ſurrounded us, the Noiſe gathered them all together, and as we knew the Conſequence of being taken, we determined to ſtand upon our Defence; the *Portugueſe*, who are notorious Cowards, endeavoured to knock us down with their Clubs, but as Fortune will'd it, in about ten Minutes, we ſaw three of them at our Feet, and the reſt running away; fluſh'd with this Succeſs, we returned to the Houſe to bid adieu to our Damſels, intending to go immediately on board, ſlip the Cable and put to Sea; but in leſs than five Minutes, they returned with a Reinforcement, took us both, bound us, and conducted us to the Trunk. As the Morning advanced, we began to conſider of our Situation, expecting we had killed one, or more, and muſt die for it, conſequently very agreeable muſt be the Account that informed us no one was mortally wounded, and that the Affair might be amicably ſettled for Money; here we experienced the Value of a Letter of Credit, and the Efficacy of fifty Moidores,

which

which in four Hours, procured us our Liberty, the *Portugueſe* had been ſlightly pricked, and feeling the Emiſſion of their Blood, conceited themſelves dying, though in fact they were very little hurt, the Interpoſition of their long Staffs, I imagine prevented our Thruſts from having the intended Effect: the ſame Day we repaired to our Veſſel, weighed Anchor, and ſet ſail with a fair Wind; we paſſed through *Gibraltar Gut*, and directed our Courſe for the Iſland of *Sardinia*; here at *Cagliari* the Capital Town we indulged ourſelves in voluptuous living, *Grecian* Wines and *Grecian* Women, until grown cloy'd by Repetition, we put again to Sea to gather Strength, and renew the Fabrick; in this Cruiſe, my brother Lieutenant diſcovered a Diſlike to our Proceedings, and had made a Party in the Ship to inſiſt on returning Home; but, in our private Conſultations, it was indefinitively concluded to admit no Obſtructions to our Pleaſures, but to force the oppoſite Faction on board the firſt neutral Veſſel we ſhould meet; this we found no Difficulty to accompliſh, for as they were all addicted to plunder, they

were fond to board every Ship we ſpoke with; a Day, or two brought us in ſight of a Snow from *London* for *Genoa*, belonging to that Republick, the Ringleaders of the Oppoſition were called to man the Boat, and the Lieutenant to his Duty; having put off from our Ship's Side, and at the Diſtance of about ten Yards, we fired one of our great Guns with Powder only, right over the Boat, and ordered them to reſt upon their Oars, we then pointed two other Pieces, laden with Grape Shot, directly at the Boat and aſſured them that we would inſtantly ſend them to the Bottom, if they did not immediately throw all their Arms they had with them into the Sea; this they complied with, we then informed them, that as they were deſirous to return to their own Country we intended to give them an Opportunity ſo to do, and to offer them no farther Harm; upon which we ordered the Boat along ſide, and the Lieutenant to go in the Bow, when I jumped into the Stern Sheets with a Caſe of loaded Piſtols, and a drawn Sword; we then rowed towards the Veſ-

ſel,

ſel, keeping within the Command of our Privateer's Guns; I found their Papers correſpondent to what they hailed, and then told the *Genoeſe* Captain that the Perſons in the Boat had plundered Goods and Effects out of ſeveral Veſſels belonging to their Republick, and for that he muſt take them to *Genoa* to anſwer the Charge; the Captain would willingly have declined, but I inſiſted on it, and forthwith put them all in Irons on the Main Deck, the Number twelve on one Bolt; I then made ſome of the *Genoeſe* row me to our Veſſel; and then wrote Letters to His *Britannic* Majeſty's Conſul at that Port, and returned with Men to convey me back; thus we confirmed ourſelves Abſolute, and ſtruck a Terror in the Reſidue of the Crew, and although the identical Perſons ſent away, really had committed many Outrages on the high Seas againſt the Republick of *Genoa*, and ſeveral other neutral Ports, I have been ſince informed they were all ſet at Liberty immediately after their Arrival. Being relieved from the Dread of Mutiny, and apparently Secure, in conforming to our Inclinations, we always

made every Wind, a fair Wind; and whatever Harbour happened to be under our Lee, when our Proviſions, or Liquor failed, we immediately bore away for it; we touched at *Leghorn*, *Naples*, *Cyprus*, *Sicily*, and *Tunis*, and at every Place got Supplies, and continued in the ſame Manner, till at laſt our forged Credentials were known throughout the Streights, and our Credit ſtopped, ſo that to make a Virtue of Neceſſity we were obliged to ſhift our Station having not taken one Prize in eight Months; we had Information of this Diſcovery from another Privateer at Sea, and having not Proviſions enough to carry us to *England*, we were obliged to put into *Gibraltar*; here, in four Days for ready Money we ſupplied ourſelves, ſailed away, and arrived ſafe at *Guerniſey*, having run the Ship about Four Thouſand Pounds in Debt; with what Effrontery my good Captain (whom I never ſaw ſince) faced his Merchants I cannot determine, but for my Part I never adventured on Shore, but the firſt Evening after our Arrival went on board a Man of War Sloop, then in the Road, and in her I went Paſ-

ſenger

ſenger to *Plymouth*: Here the ſecond Day after my Arrival, in defence of Captain *B. C.* I was run through the Body, lay five Weeks in extreme Pain, and my recovery was eſteemed by the Skilful as Miraculous: Being grown ſtrong, I purpoſed to have another Touch at privateering, and having obtained thirty Pounds on a falſe Note from a Jew in *Plymouth*, I ſet out for *Briſtol*, here I was not long before I ſhipped myſelf Lieutenant of a Privateer, went out a four Months Cruiſe, and returned without any Succeſs, I muſt not here omit this Thing, that we put into the *Groin* in *Spain*, where I became acquainted with a Girl about fourteen Years of Age, the Maſterpiece of Nature; and ſome Months afterwards went in the Packet from *Falmouth* to renew our Intimacy, as I ſhall have Occaſion to ſpeak of hereafter. Returning from thence, I engaged in another Privateer belonging to *Briſtol*, and had no better Fortune than before, ſo that having contracted ſome Debts, I was arreſted, and Men being then wanted to man our Fleets, I had my Choice to enter for the King's Service or go to Gaol,

the

the Former it may be reaſonably ſuppoſed I embraced: The *Brilliant* Frigate was then in *King's Road*, and on board of her I was put as a common Man; Time however diſcovered Merit conſpicuous in me for a better Station, and I was once more put on the Quarter-Deck, and at different Times acted in the different Capacities of Midſhipman and Mate, in which latter Office I appeared at the Reductionof the gallant *Thurot*, and came in one of the conquer'd Frigates to *Spithead*; there was then riding the *Swiftſure* from which I had formerly deſerted, with the ſame Commander, who thought proper to make me a Priſoner, and to have me tried by a Court-Martial, the Reſult of which was, that I was acquitted on the Evidence of a commiſſioned Officer, that I returned under the Proclamation; during my impriſonment on board the *Swiftſure*, a Tranſaction happened that occaſioned my getting clear of her; two Women of the Weſt-Country came to ſee one of our Crew, they ſtay'd on board a Night or two, and a principal Officer found Means to get one of them to his Bed, and I the other; my Lady was tolerably condeſcending,

but

but the other, when ſhe got aſhore went and ſwore a Rape againſt the Officer, which made him think it neceſſary that I ſhould remain to be a Witneſs in his behalf, the Iſſue of the Trial I am not acquainted with, for as I knew I could do him no Service I decamped, with a Reſolution to live upon Land, and no more eat the Bread of Slavery. I was now quite deſtitute of Money, and obliged to have Recourſe to my Wits, for which Purpoſe, I took a lodging in a Part of *Portſmouth*, where I was not known, and although I kept myſelf pretty much retired, I ſoon got acquainted with ſome new Female Faces, and to one in particular I declared honourable Love, and under Pretence that I was ordered to *London* to get a Lieutenant's Commiſſion, on repeated Proteſtations to make her my Wife at my return, I borrowed thirty Guineas from her Brother, with which I once more ſet out for *London*, and in a few Days having conſumed the greater Part of it in Riot and Exceſs, I was induced to commit a Forgery on Mr. *C. T.* for which I have been ſince tried and acquitted at the *Old Bailey*: the Money

thereby

thereby obtained (being wearied and unſafe in the Town and thinking of my pretty engaging *Spaniard*) defrayed the Expences of my Journey to *Falmouth*; where I embarked on board one of the Packets, and arrived ſafe at the *Groin*; here I found the moſt exquiſite Piece of Workmanſhip that ever my Eyes beheld, in Raptures ready to diſcloſe ambroſial Kiſſes, and to open a new, dear, delightful Scene, which in the Proſodigality of Eloquence cannot be deſcribed; her Figure, Form, and conveyances of Love remain unrivalled in my Breaſt; yet let not the vivifying Thought ſo far tranſport me, as to make me forget a Plan well laid, and executed previous to my Departure from *England*, to make our Happineſs there the more Conſummate; I had before made myſelf acquainted with the *Britiſh* Conſul, and by dining with him once or twice, had learned the Names of his Correſpondents in *England*, and the Nature of his Connections, and moreover had taken a Letter out of his Parlour, which I thought would one time or other prove ſerviceable to me; the Hand writing of this Letter I counterfeited to admiration, and in the ſame Stile,

wrote

wrote a Letter of Credit in behalf of myſelf, and another of Advice by Poſt to confirm the one I carried; the Letters imported that I was to travel to St. *Sebaſtians* by Land, on Buſineſs of Conſequence, and that my Bills would be duly honoured, for Five Hundred Pounds; The Bait took, and before I had any Notion of applying to him, he was ſearching for me up and down the Town of *Corunna*, when he found me, I made an Apology that the Fatigues of the Voyage had incapacitated me to go Abroad, or to proceed on my Journey; in return, he congratulated me on my ſafe Arrival, invited me to his Houſe, behaved extreamly genteel, was ſatisfied with my Credentials, and never remembred to have ſeen me before; but if he had, there was no room to ſuſpect a Cheat. Being reſolved to enjoy as much of the Company of my fair Enchantreſs as poſſible, I concluded it beſt to feign an Indiſpoſition, and not to aſk any Money until I abſolutely wanted it; all I had to fear was, that he ſhould anſwer the Letter before I had given him a Bill, to remove which Danger, I began to recover my Health in about a Fortnight, and went to acquaint him that

I thought myſelf well enough to undertake the Journey; he immediately aſked me what Money I ſhould want, and without the leaſt Heſitation furniſhed me with One Hundred Piſtoles for which I gave a Draught on his Friend; he alſo favoured me with a Letter to a Merchant at St. *Sebaſtians*, becoming reſponſible for the Remainder of my Credit, as was requeſted in the Letter to him; the greateſt Difficulty was yet to come, how to get away the deſirable Partner of my Heart, of whom I was no way ſatiated by Enjoyment; the Maſk was hard, for although in her Father's Houſe, ſhe ſtole every Night to ſlumber in my Arms, yet none of the Family ſuſpected our Intimacy, nor was it eaſy to perſuade her to leave her Home; force of Argument accompliſhed what I ſhall ever repent, ſhe conſented, and eloped, we went ſafe to St. *Sebaſtians*: Here I was carreſſed, my Credit was eſtabliſhed, and my Converſation coveted; the firſt Week I took care to ſecure Four Hundred Piſtoles in Specie, and about the Value of One Hundred more in Silks, Linens, &c. and in about twenty Days, a Courier arrived from *Corunna*, to contradict my Credit,

and

and to have me ſecured; the dear Object of my Love, as if ordained to protect her Deſtroyer, firſt heard the unwelcome News, communicated it to me, and on her Knees intreated I would diſregard her, and take Care of myſelf; ſhe refuſed to accompany me, Kiſſes and Tears were intermixed at parting; I flew to a Schooner bound to *Dublin*, ſailed that very Day, and went ſafe to *Tenmore*. How ſhall I inlarge my Theme in praiſe of that Inimitable of Inimitables? what Conſolation was an Hundred Piſtoles to a wounded Heart? I condemn myſelf for leaving her more than for all the evil Actions of my Life; ſhe never returned Home, but from the Account I have ſince received died in four Days melancholly Mad. Notwithſtanding this ſevere Stroke, to be ſeparated from one I dearly loved, I could not diſſent from my darling Paſſion, but in *Ireland*, under a fictitious Name, was introduced to the Nobility, and Families of the firſt Faſhion, ſet up an Equipage, paſſed for a Man of great Eſtate, addreſſed and was encouraged by Ladies of Fortune and Diſtinction, and at one and the ſame Time was on the Point of Marriage with the Daughter of one No-

bleman, and the Neice of another by Conſent of all Parties, a third I am married to no Way inferior to either; 'tis amazing to what Perfection I arrived in the Art of pleaſing and commanding Confidence; yet at length Juſtice diſplays the Ballance, and evinces to the World I am not the Man I repreſent, I am arreſted for Debt, thrown into Gaol, pitied by ſome, deſpiſed by others, and allowed by all to want nothing but the Acres to conſtitute me what I vainly aimed at; my dear Wife, by whom I have two Children living, comforts me in my Diſtreſs, diſcovers an amazing Conſtancy and Sincerity of Heart, and manifeſts the known Truth, that it was not the Name, the Title, or the Equipage ſhe wedded to; but ſeemingly joyful at the Deception, hugs, and forgives the Deceiver, and diſpiſes the Allurements of Splendour and Magnificence. Behold me in Priſon immured, living on the gaudy Trappings of a Beau, until all's conſumed, neglected by my Wife's Friends, though not by her, and reduced at laſt to an uncommon Degree of Diſtreſs. Fortune once more pitied my Condition,

and

and pointed out the Way to eſcape, and as if I had been the whole Time ſleeping o'er my Calamities, I in an Inſtant rouſed from Lethargy, made the Attempt, and obtained my Freedom; a few Days I ſecreted myſelf in a private Part of the Town, to give my Wife Time to raiſe me ſome Money, but as ſhe could get none from her Friends, conſented to pawn her Watch and other Trinkets, for Forty Pounds; with this Money I went to a neighbouring Sea Port, and took my Paſſage for the *Iſle of Man*; my Wife would moſt readily have accompanied me, but I objected, as it might be the Means of diſcovering me, but promiſed to ſend for her as ſoon as poſſible, however I never did; and I readily muſt confeſs, that although ſhe poſſeſſed all that's deſerving, or deſirable in Woman, I never had the real Affection for her which the indiſſoluble Knot engaged me to; had ſhe been my Miſtreſs, I might have loved her better. The Propenſity of Mankind to Variety is ſtrange, and I can give no Reaſon for mine more than this, that antecedent to any Tranſaction here written, I had in the County of *Northampton*

depoſited

depoſited my Heart in a Virgin's Breaſt, who failed in Credit and Sincerity; that Loſs was never lulled in the Poſſeſſion of any other but my fair *Spaniard*; and here I cannot but remark a Certainty I have many Years known, that unſettled Minds, and unſatisfied Diſpoſitions, ſooner, or later terminate in ſhameful Deſtruction, and that the ultimate End of their grand Purſuit tends to make them obnoxious to Poſterity; In the *Iſle of Man* I diſcovered the ſame gay and volatile Diſpoſition, and was beginning to get the Countenance of the Merchants, and Eſteem of the Ladies; when an Account of my *Iriſh* Debts and Eſcape, and a Deſcription of my Perſon came there, with Orders to ſecure me, however I was too nimble for them, and before they had time to take out an Action againſt me, I was on board a *Liverpool* Trader, and ſome Leagues at Sea; when we arrived at our deſtined Port, I was more at a Loſs than ever, having very little Money, and no Acquaintance, my Wits were obliged once more to go to work, and having made myſelf acquainted with ſome Merchants Clerks, and found out their Maſters Correſpondents in *London*; I wrote Letters as from one of

thoſe, to his Friend in *Liverpool*, importing that I came from *Dublin*, deſigning to go for *London* in order to buy a Ship, and had Six Hundred Pounds Credit on their Houſe, and that I having ſignified to them I could ſuit myſelf in *Liverpool*, they beg'd I might be furniſhed withthe be forementioned Sum, and (as uſual) that my Bills ſhould have Prompt Payment, the Letters I incloſed to a Friend in *London*, calculating the Poſts to date them properly; and in due time they came, one to me, as his Anſwer to mine, and to validate the other; the Scheme could not fail, the writing being perfectly well done, and ſhortly after the Poſt came in the *Livers* began to appear, ſome to ſell Ships, and others to advance the Money to pay for them; I declined treating with any until I ſhould examine the Hulls, Rigging, &c. and for that Purpoſe went on board ſeveral, and aſked other People's Opinion who were reputed Judges: At the expiration of four Days I had agreed for a Snow at Four Hundred and Fifty Pounds, but how to get the Money into my own Hands I could not tell; at laſt I ſounded the Integrity of the Perſon I had bargained with; he was himſelf commander of

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the Veſſel, and had Directions from his Owners in *Cork* to diſpoſe of her; I found him like all the reſt of Mankind, that Money would faſhion him to any thing, and accordingly acquainted him that I really did not want the Veſſel, but under that Sanction expected to get a Sum of Money out of the Hands of ſome Merchants in *London*, who were Executors to a Will, wherein I was a principal Legatee; he admired the Excellence of the Contrivance, and we very ſhortly agreed that the Sale ſhould be tranſacted in proper Form, and he receive the Money, after which we were to retire and invalidate the Whole by my aſſigning him the Veſſel again with a preſent of Fifty Guineas. Having thus politically concluded it, I applied to my Merchants, had the Money paid, and the Affair finiſhed without the leaſt Suſpicion, nor could my Captain poſſibly dream of the Cheat, as he ſaw me give Bills for the Money, and heard that my Credit was not limited to the Sum of Four Hundred and Fifty Pounds then advanced; we parted good Friends, he well pleaſed with his Premium, and I with my Acquiſition.

quiſition. The ſame Day I croſſed the Water and went to *Cheſter*, and travelled in a Chaiſe with four Horſes Night and Day until I arrived at *Bath*, it being now the Seaſon to drink the Waters: Here I hired an Equipage, aſſumed a new Name, and thereunto annexed a large Eſtate, two Servants I put in rich Liveries, frequented all public Places, dreſſed well, and play'd deep: In a ſhort time I had no ſmall Acquaintance with Gentlemen of Rank, and imagined I had gained an Aſcendency over ſome of the moſt celebrated Ladies; but what moſt engaged my Attention, as the Security of my Ambition, was Two Thouſand Guineas which in ſix Weeks I had added to my Stock by gaming, abſtracted from all Expences. I now thought myſelf the Identical Man I perſonated, and expected that *Hazard* and *E. O.* would ſoon furniſh me with Money to buy Lands to a conſiderable amount. As my Servants knew of nothing that had happened, I only told them that I had received Letters which called me immediately to *France*; but here the Scene changes, and the inconſtancy of Fortune

obliges me to leave *Bath*: A Family with whom I had been acquainted in *Ireland*, under another falſe Name, arrives; and before the Account reached my Ears, a diſdainful Nod in a public Place from one with whom I had been particularly intimate, puts me into Confuſſion, and obliges me to withdraw; the Remarks of the Company on my ſudden retire, or on the Uneaſineſs apparently of Guilt perceptibly fluſhing in my Cheeks, I have never ſince learned; for I immediately went to my Lodgings, packed up my All and traveled in a Poſt Chaiſe, and two Servants on Horſeback until I came to *Dover*; I was under no Apprehenſion of a Purſuit, as I had been under no Neceſſity, nor had tricked any Perſon, more than by (as the common Phraſe is) fairly winning Money. At *Dover* I ſtaid ſix Days, where growing high in Blood by Continence, I made an Attack on my Hoſteſs's Niece, a fine Girl, and provoked a Surrender upon very eaſy pleaſing Terms. I was now determined to ſee *Paris*, and my new Conqueſt had no Objection to go with me, but ſuch Incumbrances were foreign to my Purpoſe, as I

was

was determined for once to pass for a Nobleman; my Title I soon fixed on, and was never without two, or three different Coats of Arms in Seals for particular Purposes, and one with a Coronet; my Business was to bring my Servants over to publish my Distinction, and to keep the Secret, they were well paid, and well fed, and had no other Right than to be conformable to my Will; yet I never gave them the least Hint of my Intentions until we arrived at *Calais*: when on the first Night after Supper I spoke to them to this Effect, that a Man of Fortune from *England*, let his Name, and Family be ever so Ancient and Honourable, was little esteemed without a Title, that no Man of Fashion appeared in *France* under his proper Name, and that I intended to report myself, and be by them reported Earl of — and if they hear you have Ten Thousand Pounds a Year will soon make it Twenty; I charged them as they valued my Displeasure, not to reveal the Secret, gave them a Lesson, and each a Piece of Money; the next Day on the Road to *Paris*, the the consequential Air I put on demanded, and received Respect due to a Count: at my nearer ap-

proach to this Metropolis, I was ſettling my Houſhold, and judging the little Difference between a *French* Wife and Twenty Thouſand *Louis d'ores*, and an *Engliſh* one with as many Guineas, determined to divide my Title with the former. I knew perfectly well notwithſtanding I could ſpeak the *French*, that an Interpretor muſt be engaged before I could peaceably enter the City, and I cannot but allow theſe Creatures uſeful, or at leaſt to me, for with the moſt aſtoniſhing Effrontery they will make Mountains of Mole Hills where lying is in queſtion; furthermore they know all the Bankeries, topping Tradeſmen, mind Ladies public and private Places of faſhionable Reſort, and are in fact very uſeful to Men of my caſt of Mind; I ſoon provided myſelf with one of this Sort, took up my Lodgings at the moſt principal *Hotel*, and the next Day added to my Retinue two Servants, neceſſary for the Equipage I had engaged, a *Valet de Chambre*, and every thing equivalent to the Dignity I had aſſumed; the firſt diſagreeable Circumſtance that attended me, was the want of ſome Perſon of Reputation to

ſatisfy

ſatisfy the inquiſitors of the Reality of my Pretentions, where as I found every other *Britiſh* Subject that appeared in the Circle of my Reſorts, had Bankers to ſupply their Purſes, Friends to invite them to their Houſes (from recommendatory Letters) and valuable Acquaintance in all Parties, proceeding from the reſpectable Introductions of the two former, for my Part I had neither, and not being able to bear the Inferiority, Ingenuity muſt ſupply the Defect, the only recourſe I had (as it was not ſafe to truſt the Execution of what I intended to any Perſon but myſelf) was to give out that I had got a ſevere Fever by inebriated Exceſſes, I imployed a Phyſician, to whom I gave Twenty *Louis d'ors* to declare me in Danger, to preſcribe and have Medicines brought to his own Houſe, to viſit me every Day, and to order that on no Pretence whatſoever any other Perſon ſhould be admitted to ſee me; the Fineſſe I uſed with him was, that I had an Intrigue in Hand with a Lady of Quality and wanted to abſent myſelf eight or ten Days from my Lodg-

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ings, without it being known either within or without Doors (except by my two truſty Servants) that I was out of the Houſe, the ſame Story of an *Intrigue I* told my confidant Servants, with Directions that no Perſon ſhould ever enter my Room or know of my Abſence, that they ſhould amuſe the Houſe by fetching in ſuch things as the Phyſician directed for Medicine and Food, and that *I* would certainly ſee them in twelve Days: *I* left them 100 *Louis d'ors* to defray expences, and late at Night *I* went to an *Inn* in the Suburbs, brought a Porter to my Lodgings, and taking with me a ſmall Portmanteau with two Suits of Cloaths, ſome Linen, and all my Money and Jewels, *I* returned to the *Inn*, took Chaiſe, and never ſtopped half an Hour at one Time until *I* reached *Calais*; here *I* had no Thought of Sleep, and finding the Wind fair, ſoon agreed for a Boat to *Dover*, where *I* landed at eight o'Clock the third Morning after leaving *Paris*; *I* inſtantly took Chaiſe for *London*, and ſlept the whole Time, except getting out of one into another, the Afternoon of the ſame Day *I* made a Lodgment of Two

Thouſand

Thouſand Pounds with an eminent Banker, and in lieu thereof got Credit to my Title for the ſame Sum in *Paris*; the principal Affair being ſettled, *I* went to a Bagnio, was ſhewed a Room, and called for Pen, *I*nk, and Paper, where *I* wrote ſeveral Letters directed to my ſelf, at my *Hotel* in *Paris*; as alſo three or four others to principal Perſons there (whom *I* had been introduced to, and had heard from their own Diſcourſe, and from other Gentlemen who had been recommended to them, whoſe Letters *I* had ſeen, who were their Correſpondents in *England*) recommending me to their Eſteem as no great Connoiſſeur in the Concerns of the World, (though affluently intitled to all its Enjoyments. Having adjuſted all things to my own Satisfaction, *I* ſent a Chair for a favourite Lady of the Town, drank plentifully of Claret, and with the Aſſiduity of a Waiting Maid, undreſſed my Laſs and hurried to embrace her. ——— *I*n the Morning *I* ſent for a truſty Friend, and delivered him the Letters *I* had wrote the over Night, to be put in the Poſt Office on *Thurſday*; that done, and ſome other Requiſites,

Requiſites, *I* took Chaiſe and arrived at *Dover* that Evening about eight o'Clock; this Night *I* ſported in the Arms of my beforementioned Landlady's obliging Niece, and in the Morning ſailed once more for *Calais*; the Wind was now contrary, and we did not land until the next Day; and *I* having Time enough being ſomewhat fatigued remained there that Night, and on the Day following went on for *Paris*, where *I* arrived in perfect Health, having been nine Days away. It was about Mid-day when *I* entered the Town, and having quitted the Chaiſe and houſed myſelf, *I* remained quiet until Evening, when *I* ſent for one of my Servants, *I* found all things to my Wiſh, and concerted Matters ſo well, as to get to my Lodging without any Diſcovery, *I* went to Bed, and ſhortly after found myſelf very ill and feveriſh, *I* ſent for my Phyſician, who declared me worſe than *I* thought, and imputed it to certain Extravagancies which had debilitated me, and diſordered my whole Frame, *I* did not in the leaſt contradict it, and my Servants reaſonably concurred in the Belief, ſo

that

that the real Cauſe, the Fatigue of traveling remained undiſcovered, what paſſed the enſuing four Days I cannot form the leaſt Idea of, but remember when I came to myſelf as if out of a Trance, or a forced Sleep, all ſeemed ſtrange about me, and I, who only thought I had only ſlept one Night, was ſurprized to hear that I had dozed, and been inſenſible four Days and Nights, and in that time had taken no Sort of Food: I found myſelf calm, ſerene, and undiſturbed, and what added to that compoſure and tranquility of Mind, was the Account of my Servants, that ſeveral Perſons of Diſtinction had been enquiring after me, and Phyſicians ſent from unknown Quarters, to inſpect my Malady. I had now no Cauſe of refuſing Viſits, and therefore ordered all Perſons of Rank to be admitted up Stairs: The next Day my Appartments were ſucceſſively filled, many of my Acquaintance contracted here who held me in eſteem, and had frequently aſked after my wellfare and were refuſed Admittance, renewed their Civilities, on hearing of my Recovery: I had a Banker to offer me Money, ennobled Perſons to court my Acquaintance, and Tradeſmen

to ſollicit my Cuſtom; I conſequently thought myſelf at a proper Pitch, and would have attempted no farther Aggrandization, had I been ſecured in the immutability I then enjoyed: but thinking it unſafe to truſt any thing to Chance, I bent my Thoughts on a Wife (or more properly ſpeaking, a Wife's Fortune) but before I could accommodate myſelf with the two in one, ſomething interfered which obliged me to abſcond without either; I had been informed of a Lady of Quality (no way deficient in point of Fortune) that would condeſcend to grant the laſt Favour to a Gentleman that would be ſo obliging as to looſe Five hundred *Louis d'ores* with her, I had been ſeveral times in public Company with the Lady, knew that ſhe had a particular Attachment to Cards, but did not think ſhe was in want of Money; or that her Paſſion carried her ſo far, as to make her proſtitute her Virtue, rather than relinquiſh the Vice; however, I determined to make the Trial, and though at the Expence of Five Hundred *Louis d'ores*, hoped to find my Account in it: It was ſome Days before I had

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an Opportunity to put my Scheme in Practice, which happened at a private *Drum*, where three or four Tables being filled, and only a few ſtanders by (which declined playing) ſhe ſeemed very uneaſy, and expreſſed a Deſire that another Party at *Quadrille* might be made, I inſtantly ſeconded her Motion, and with ſome Difficulty prevailed on two other Ladies to acquieſce; we ſeated ourſelves, and play'd without any great Advantage to either, until the Company began to withdraw; and I muſt own ſhe had ſomething about her very enchanting, and ſeemed to play with an advent'rous Spirit, regarding more the Honour of winning, than the Value of the Money; but I afterwards found by woeful Experience I was unſkilled in *French* Politicks, and had miſconjectured her Intelligencers; when our Table began to move, I propoſed what was moſt readily accepted to engage this Lady at *Piquet*; and in about two Hours with much Complacency ſuffered her to win upwards of 120*l.* in which time I convinced her, that from choice and deſire I permitted her to triumph over me, as from the very laſt Hand which was for forty Piece s

I had put out three Aces from four, to prevent my having a Repique younger Hand; this ſhe acknowledged herſelf ſenſible of, and would have perſuaded me to continue playing until I recovered what I had loſt, but I abſolutely refuſed, unleſs ſhe ſuffered me to tell her in ſome other Place, what I really had loſt; which with a languiſhing look I pretended ſhe did not know, Deſire is poignant, but Art is keener, ſhe took the Hint, gave me a ſignificant Look, and ordered her Chair to the Door; politeneſs obliged me to lend her my Hand down Stairs, but at the Door, I muſt own my ſurprize, when ſhe inſiſted I muſt ſend away my Carriage and Servants and follow her on Foot, I run up again for my Hat and Sword, took a formal leave of the remaining Company, and was implicit to her Commands; excepting, that I ordered one of my Servants to come after me at a Diſtance: a Quarter of an Hour brought her to her Houſe, and I ſaw her Chair enter a large Court Yard, and the Gates immediately ſhut; upon which I placed myſelf right oppoſite ruminating whether I had better put up with the Loſs of my Money, or wait to obtain what I had fooled

it

it away for: at laſt I fixed on the Latter, and in a few Minutes a ſmall Door contiguous to the Court Yard being opened, I diſmiſſed my Servant, and haſted to feaſt on Happineſs as I thought: I was conducted to an handſome Appartment up one Pair of Stairs, where I found a Card Table ready ſet, a Bed elegantly hung, and lighted Wax Tapers in abundance: the Lady ſoon entered and as cordially took her Chair at the Table, as if I had no Thought of any Diverſion but Cards: finding myſelf alone with the Objeſt I wiſhed to enjoy, I made no ſcruple to unboſom myſelf, with the interdictions of a paſſionate, fond, languiſhing Lover, and aſſured her that Cards were quite remote from my Thoughts, and I hoped from hers; and that though I felt a Pleaſure in looſing to let her win, that Sort of Amuſement was unneceſſary, ſince all I had in the World was devoted to her Service: ſhe ſmiled, yet ſeemed to want farther explanation; upon which I inſtantly threw my Purſe into her Lap, and claſped one of her Hands, aſſured her I had a Fortune ſufficient to indulge the moſt pompous Immagination, and only wiſhed to kneel and lay it at her Feet: the

Cards

Cards now ſeemed to be forgot, and I by Degrees attained to every decent Liberty that a rambling Hand could enjoy, ſhe kept playing with my Purſe, in which was upwards of Five Hundred Pounds, and occaſionally took an opportunity to inlarge on the brilliancy of a Diamond Ring I then wore, which coſt me ſixty Pounds; there was no poſſibility to avoid putting it on her Finger, which afforded an Opening to convey an Amorous Embrace. She was now by report in the 23d Year of her Age, and though not the moſt perfect Beauty I ever ſaw, was juſtly eſteemed handſome before ſhe was out of her Teens; ſhe had been married to a General Officer far advanced in Years, who being as much attached to her as ſhe was to Intrigue, contracted that epidemic Diſorder called Jealouſy, and blowed his Brains out; and as a convincing Proof of the ſincerity of his Love left her the abſolute Miſtreſs of near 2000 *l.* a Year. My Readers will no doubt reaſonably conjecture that I would willingly have put myſelf in receipt of her Rents at the Expence of Religion, and a ſecond Marriage notwithſtanding the

Currency

Currency that they were far inadequate to ſupport the Sphere ſhe moved in. The Ring before-mentioned remained on her Finger, and ſhe penſively admiring it; when on a ſudden, Tears in abundance fell from her Eyes; moved at the Circumſtance, I employed myſelf in drying them with Kiſſes: and finding her in appearance incapable of utterance, ſeized her in my Arms, and bore her to the Bed; it may be expected I was not long in diſrobing her of all ſuperfluities, and flying to the uncovered Hope for ſportive covert: inſenſible ſhe bore it, void of Tranſport, communicating none of thoſe Extacies peculiar to the amorous Fair, but on the contrary, was the moſt inſipid Woman I ever knew; however to make my Abilities conſpicuous, and engage her mine, I paſſed the Night reluctantly in unprovok'd Conceſſions, hoping the Day's dawn would produce a Change. Early in the Morning I left her Houſe, promiſing to return in the Evening in order to have another Party at *Picquet*; but on returning to my Lodgings, heard there had been very ſtrict inquiry made after me by Perſons unknown. Being

ing uneaſy in my Mind, and fearful of a Diſcovery, I immediately diſcharged my Servants, packed up all my Effects, and made as precipitate a Flight as poſſible to *Calais*, and from thence to *Dover* (Fortune favouring me with a Paſſage immediately on my Arrival at *Calais*) after a little refreſhment I ſet out for *London*, and lived as free as uſual, frequenting all public Places, and in a ſhort Time I ſpent the greateſt Part of my Money which obliged me to make uſe of my Wits once more; and having ſettled the Plan with an Accomplice, ſet out for *Briſtol*, and worked there as a poor labouring Man, going by the Name of *Godfrey Stafford*. Accordingly in *May* laſt my Accomplice wrote under the Name of a Gentleman of great Credit in *London*, to an eminent Merchant in the City of *Briſtol*, in Order to his finding out a Nephew of the late *Godfrey Stafford*, Eſq; of *London*, who, the Letter purported, had left him an Eſtate of Two Thouſand Pounds *per Annum*, and about Eighteen Thouſand Pounds in ready Money. No ſooner was the Letter received, but immediate Search was made after the Heir to this large Fortune; and, many Inquiries, and

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Deſcriptions being given, I was found at an Houſe of ill Fame, ſeemingly expiring for want of Food; but the Meſſenger not being willing to ſurprize me with the unexpected News (as he imagined) only told me at firſt, that he had brought me a Guinea to relieve me in my abject Situation: After ſome little Talk he aſked me if I was not a Relation of *Godfrey Stafford*, of *London*, Eſq; and being anſwered in the Affirmative, and examining a remarkable Scar which I have in my Breaſt, which was deſcribed in the Letter, he informed me of the Eſtate, as above, that was left me, preſenting me with Twenty Guineas for preſent Uſe. The next Day I appeared on 'Change in genteel Mourning, and was complimented on the Occaſion by many of the Gentlemen of the City of *Briſtol*; almoſt every Tradeſman preſſing me for my Orders in whatever I ſhould have Occaſion for. I then received from a Jeweler, Goods to the Value of upwards of 51*l.* from a Linen Draper, Linen to the Amount of 26*l.* and from a Taylor, Cloaths to the Sum of 16*l.* I alſo drew a Bill on a Company in *London* for 400*l.* and wanted the Caſh

immediately of his Merchant-Adviſer, who told me he could not comply with letting me have ſo large a Sum, 'till he had received Advice of my Draught being accepted; but in the mean While, would ſupply me with ſuch neceſſary Caſh as I ſhould immediately want. In a few Days after Advice came, that the Letter the Merchant had received was a Forgery; and that there never was any ſuch Gentleman lived in *London*, or elſewhere, as *Godfry Stafford*, Eſq; The ſame Day I left *Briſtol*, thinking it unſafe to continue there any longer; in ſix Days after I was taken in *Kingſwood*, near *Briſtol*, where I had been revelling all the Time. Soon after I was taken I delivered moſt of the Goods back again and on *Thurſday* the 3d of *June*, was commited to *Newgate*, by the Name of *Benjamin Conyers Stafford*, for defrauding the aforeſaid Merchants of upwards of 40 *l.* *June* the 20th I was removed from *Briſtol* to *London*, in Order to take my Trial at the *Old Bailey*; but was removed from thence to *Guildford* in *Surry*, where I was tried for having felonioufly

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publiſhed as true, knowing it to be falſe, forged, and counterfeited, a certain Bill of Exchange of *John Drummond*, upon Meſs. *Willet* and *Wakefield*, for 82*l.* 10*s.* dated *Birmingham*, *October* 8, 1766, with an intent to defraud Mr. *John King*, Collar-maker, in *Weſtminſter*, and received Sentence of Death.

A Copy of his Petition to His Majeſty after receiving a Reſpite of 14 Days.

From a dark dreary Cell, heavy in Chains, condenſed with Horrors, and condemn'd to die, to Britain's *Illuſtrious Sovereign the Lord's Anointed, my adventʼrous Muſe with trembling Pinion ſoars, Hail heavenly Truth, from thy ſeraphick Throne look favourably down, aſſiſt my elaborate Thought, inſpire my plaintive Song.*

IN the Bulwarks of this Nation ſome Years conſpicuous I appeared, and under the Banners

of immemorable Heroes, evinced an Attachment to my Country's Intereſt, rather than the Eſtabliſhment of Domeſtick Peacefull independence; The Life of Liberty I then gave for Voluntary Confinement, knew not a painful Hour to tire my Soul, nor were they common Joys or Proſpects I left behind: The Laurel diſplay'd, I unprovided for, and Death's havocking Hand having felled all my beſt Friends, Diſtreſs unpalliated in Time appears, and charges me to hazard in a Reſcue that Life which unreſcued muſt ſoon finiſh: I did the Fact for which I am to ſuffer, and at the firſt was doom'd by wholſome Letter'd Laws e'er this to have ſeen another World, had not the beſt of Kings indulgently poſtpon'd the dreadful Sentence, and made me Debtor for fourteen Days of Life; Thanks to His Sacred Majeſty! but now the direful Scene approaches and moving on the ſwift Wings of Time preſents *September*'s fifth Day to be my laſt Day. Fatal Cataſtrophe! to be forced away in the very Prime of Life and Health yet bloſſoming in Sin, unprepar'd to challenge the leaſt Particle of that propitious grand Ranſom

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which Penitence and Prayer might give a Sanction to; how ſhall I preſume to aſk an Extention of the Royal Clemency who am unworthy its ſalutary Influence; but the more unworthy the more benign the Mercy, and ſince the Country's View, by Baniſhment may be fulfilled, that the Author of all good Works, *would not the Death of a Sinner, but rather he ſhould repent and be ſaved*, may inſpire His juſt Viceregent to ſave an unannealed Soul from inextricable intenſe Miſery, by permitting its corrupted Manſion to expiate its Guilt in Countries far remote, ſuch Power alone belongs to Monarchs and in our Auſpicious Chief daily makes manifeſt in lenient Radiance the Seat well choſen, therefore I invoke the tuneful Nine to re-echo the ſanctified Theme, that unmoleſted and ſecure in perfect Peace and Happineſs Our Sovereign Lord the King and his princely Proteſtant Progeny until Time is no more may ſkilfully direct the Governing Reins of ALBION's Iſle.

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A Letter he ſent to the worthy Divine that attended him during his Confinement.

Reverend Sir,

AS a convincing Proof that your Diſcourſe of Yeſterday was not totally unavailing, I aſſure you that from thoſe Inſtructions I am regulating the Manſion I now occupy, to receive properly that deſirable Furniture you ſo juſtly recommended, as neceſſary to Salvation, and wiſh I could ſay with *Hezekiah*, I had always kept it Habitable. But ſince human Frailties remain unaccounted for, I muſt conform to the Maſterly Impulſe of an unerring Conſcience, and approach the Banquet of Life, and partake of the Ranſom of Souls in plain native Truth, diveſted of Diſguiſe.

To evince which to Perfection, as a Point of Faith I have definitively eſtabliſhed, I purpoſe ſacramentally to accept in real Preſence, the Body and Blood of my Redeemer, crediting his Death and Paſſion for Love of me, and his Incorporation with the Corrupt, to eradicate the Corruption.

I ſhould be loſt to all Senſe of Gratitude if I omitted to return you my unfeigned Thanks for your diſintereſted Admonitions, but as you admit the moſt effectual Monitor to be emboſom'd in the Principal, I hope you will hold me Guiltleſs for my implicit Obedience. —— Conſider Mr. ——, I have long practiſed the Art of Forgery, for which and its attendant Conſequences I am condemned to die; but to continue in the ſame Tract to the laſt Hour, or to accept Forgeries tho' countenanced by the Names of *Calvin*, *Luther*, *Cranmer*, or *Harry*, would be unpardonable, I ſhall therefore copy the Remnant of my Life from the expreſs Words of the Apoſtles, and their expreſſive Delegatees, regardleſs of unſanctified Traditions or excommunicate Arguments; the Word *Catholic* is exoticly underſtood, but trace Univerſality to its priſtine Origin and you ſhall find only one Repoſitor and one Repoſitory, whence and from whom may be purchaſed the requiſites to put our Houſe in Order, and to paſs tranquily into Eternity, agreeable to the Meaning of your well choſen Text; the Certainty of

Death

Death is well known, the Opiate or Metamorphosis unconstrued, and notwithstanding we differ in Opinion, I dissent from your Method, and henceforth decline the same Belief and Practice, I should esteem it impious and uncharitable to doubt your being intrinsically Virtuous, and worthily constituted for incomprehensible Beatitudes; that you may, sheltered by the Shadow of Celestial Wings, and in the Presence of the immaculate Lamb,

Is and shall be the Humble Prayer

Here and Hereafter,

of

Benjamin Stratford.

FINIS.